Auditing Actions Taken to Prevent Human Error

GUIDING QUESTION *Ask to be shown what happens if the task is done wrong. If the answer is that somebody would notice, ask who, and when, and what they would be looking at.*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the four parts with the people who own the process. The left-hand text comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what the market says, what actually holds, and your property

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
Training records evidence actions to prevent human error.	No. Training records evidence training, not necessarily effective prevention of human error.	
A documented human error prevention programme is required.	No. ISO 9001 does not prescribe a separate documented programme.	
The requirement is satisfied by competence and awareness.	No. Competence and awareness help, but clause 8.5.1 also calls for actions to prevent human error as applicable.	
Human error prevention applies only to safety-critical tasks.	No. The requirement applies where human error can affect controlled production or service provision, not only to safety-critical tasks.	
An auditor may not perform a process being audited.	Not categorically. Testing or observing a process can be appropriate if authorized, safe and not converted into consultancy or operational responsibility.	
A property must identify every possible human error.	No. Controls should address relevant and foreseeable error modes appropriate to the process; exhaustive enumeration is not required.	
A double signature constitutes an error prevention control.	Only if the double-signature control is genuinely designed, applied and effective for the error being prevented.	

2. Objective evidence: what an auditor would examine

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Document	Whatever the property holds identifying the errors it intends to prevent, in which processes, and what it has implemented against each.		
Record	Evidence that an implemented action was tested rather than merely introduced, and any record of the error having occurred before and after.		
Read	The property's stated actions, classified into removing the opportunity, revealing the error, easing the correct action, or communicating. The fourth category is usually the largest, and on its own it seldom demonstrates an adequate control.		
Told	Ask the process owner to name the moment at which the error would be caught, and by whom, looking at what. Hesitation is the answer.		
Seen	The attempt, within the four limits and agreed in advance. Four seconds of it establishes what four documents cannot.		
Absence	There will usually be no list of error modes, which the standard does not require as such, and no record of any action having been tested under the conditions in which the error occurs. Both absences are ordinary and neither has ever been noticed.		

3. Common mistakes: self-check

Mistake	Why it matters	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)
Accepting training records as evidence.	Training is the right instrument for a knowledge gap; on its own it leaves the conditions of the task unchanged.	
Auditing prevention before the errors have been determined.	Without named errors there is nothing to test; the absent determination is a lead to follow, and a finding only when a foreseeable error proves uncontrolled.	
Verifying the action in a walkthrough.	A demonstration at eleven in the morning tests none of the three conditions under which the error occurs.	
Attempting the error without agreement.	Unannounced, it is entrapment; agreed in advance at supervisor level, it is a test of a control.	
Attempting an error with consequences.	Nothing involving an allergen, a medication, a lock, a payment instrument or anything that could reach a guest is available to this method.	
Accepting a double signature as a control.	A second signature is a second communication unless somebody is looking at something different from what the first person looked at.	
Writing the finding about the person.	The observation is that the process has no moment of detection; the person did what the auditor asked them to do.	
Auditing in office hours.	The conditions under which the error does not occur are exactly the conditions in which a convenient audit takes place.	

4. Action plan

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
The audit begins with the property's determination of its own error modes.			
Communications are classified as communications.			
The action is tested by attempting the error, within the four limits, agreed in advance and stopped by the auditor if nothing else stops it.			
Where the attempt is not permissible, the department is asked to name the moment of detection.			
The audit happens when the error is likely.			

In brief

The requirement asks for actions implemented so that human error does not occur, and an audit of it has three steps: establish which errors the property has determined are available to its people; classify what it has implemented against each into removing the opportunity, revealing the error, easing the correct action, or merely communicating; and test the action under the conditions in which the error actually occurs.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 2b: The Lens, subchapter 3.11. This sheet does not reproduce the text of any standard; work with your own copy of ISO 9001:2026 from an authorised source.